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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2828
INFO RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

S E C R E T TUNIS 000306

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR NEA/FO (GRAY) NEA/MAG (HOPKINS AND HARRIS) AND
S/WCI (WILLIAMSON, MORRISON AND MUBANGU)
NSC FOR CAMPONOVO
DOF FOR MONHEIM
DOD FOR LIOTTA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/06/2017
TAGS: [PTER](#) [KAWC](#) [PINR](#) [TS](#)
SUBJECT: MOI POC ON DETAINEES OFFERS NO ASSURANCES

REF: A. TUNIS 259

- [1](#)B. TUNIS 257
- [1](#)C. TUNIS 193
- [1](#)D. TUNIS 139
- [1](#)E. SECSTATE 10683

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ROBERT F. GODEC FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d)

[1](#)1. (C/NF) On March 6, PolOff met with Ministry of Interior (MOI) Director of International Cooperation Tahar Fellous Refai to discuss the proposed transfer of Tunisian detainees at Guantanamo. Fellous was identified by the MFA (Ref A) as the GOT logistical point of contact on the proposed transfer. (NOTE: As Fellous had not returned multiple calls from Post to set up a meeting, PolOff raised the transfer on the margins of an RSO meeting with Fellous. END NOTE.)

[1](#)2. (S/NF) PolOff asked Fellous which ministry would assume control of the detainees upon their return to Tunisia. Fellous said that once the GOT knows the details of the transfer (e.g. names, date, time), he would coordinate the logistical arrangements and inform the involved parties. PolOff asked if the detainees would enter MOI custody. Fellous said he would have to coordinate such details with the MOI and Ministry of Justice, but that where the individuals are to be detained is a "sovereignty question," not a logistics question. (NOTE: MOI DG for Special Services Abdallah Hammouda told SIMO on February 22 that the detainees would "of course" go into MOI custody upon their return. END NOTE.) PolOff noted that the USG hoped to transfer the three detainees as early as April and asked how such details could be obtained. Fellous said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the proper entity to which Post should direct its questions.

[1](#)3. (C/NF) COMMENT: Although designated the GOT POC, Fellous refused to provide any useful substantive information about GOT thinking on the transfer. Despite being knowledgeable about the issue ("We drafted this diplomatic note"), Fellous' responses suggested he had no personal knowledge about how the transfer would proceed. While he may have been insufficiently prepared to discuss, it is more likely that Fellous (and the MOI) do not intend to answer the questions. Ambassador has requested an appointment with Minister of Interior Rafik Belhaj Kacem to attempt to obtain necessary assurances and details. END COMMENT.
GODEC